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S E C R E T TOKYO 002148

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [XD](#) [ZK](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY BOUCHER'S
VISIT TO TOKYO

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)
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11. (C) SUMMARY: Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and, to a lesser extent, Central Asia are all actively on the Japanese radar screen. We are very glad you were able to reschedule your visit to Tokyo to discuss these pressing issues with your Japanese counterparts. On Afghanistan, you will find a government that is wrestling with how to do more in order to fulfill commitments to the Afghan people and the international community to make a "substantial" commitment, while at the same time fending off political attacks from a recently empowered and aggressive opposition party. On India, Japan is also coming to grips with how to support it's strongest ally, the United States, and an always close friend, India, while remaining true to long-standing non-proliferation imperatives. Foreign Minister Koumura and Director General Inomata, who you will meet, will have just returned from a three-day visit to New Delhi. On Pakistan, Japan has recently announced an increase in aid in the hopes of encouraging the growth of democracy and a more vibrant economy. And in Central Asia, Japanese attempts to counter Chinese and Russian inroads, while modest, closely align with our efforts to develop southward-looking economies with more options for trade and exchange. Your counterparts from four different bureaus are looking forward to sharing their views with you and to listening to what you have to tell them about U.S. thinking on these critical issues. END SUMMARY.

DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONTEXT

12. (C) Many of the issues you will be discussing in Tokyo are closely tied to and complicated by a domestic political struggle now taking place between the majority Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and the opposition Democratic Party of

Japan (DPJ). Until last summer, the LDP and its coalition partner, the New Komeito Party, controlled both the upper and lower houses of the Diet. The opposition was largely ignored and whatever initiatives the LDP leadership decided to pursue were easily enacted.

13. (C) All that changed in July 2007, when the LDP lost its majority control of the upper house after mishandling the loss of over 50 million records of individuals' pension contributions. Although the LDP and New Komeito, with a two-thirds majority in the lower house, can still enact legislation over the disapproval of the upper house (and in fact did so to reauthorize Japan's participation in the Operation Enduring Freedom Maritime Interdiction Operation), doing so is not taken lightly in the Japanese political context. The bottom line is that with its newfound political clout, and its desire to bring down the LDP and seize control of the government, the DPJ is now mounting serious opposition to many LDP initiatives, such as continued support for OEF and for the continued deployment of Air Self Defense Force assets in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

14. (C) Even for issues that have not yet come up for widespread public debate, such as the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, the LDP and the New Komeito are now very shy about forcing things, fearing that DPJ opposition on issues such as deployment of forces abroad or weakening the NPT regime will resonate with voters in the next lower house election. The Komeito, which is the political wing of a pacifist Buddhist sect, is particularly opposed to any overseas dispatch of Japanese forces. Since their support is key to LDP power, they have an effective veto over Fukuda's policies.

15. (C) The LDP's declining popularity led Prime Minister Fukuda to shuffle his cabinet last week in the hopes of strengthening the party's hand for upcoming elections. However, the fallout of all of this is that you will find a Japanese government whose hands are nearly tied on several foreign policy initiatives that are of critical importance to us.

AFGHANISTAN

16. (S) It is fair to say that Afghanistan is Issue Number One for the recently appointed second cabinet of Prime Minister Fukuda. Under pressure from us and, to a lesser extent, other ISAF partners, the Japanese government is in the final stages of compiling a package of new financial and personnel support measures for Afghanistan. The new assistance is provided in response to a direct request from the President to PM Fukuda at the G-8 Summit last month for Japan to expand its presence in Afghanistan. The President told Prime Minister Fukuda on July 6 that Japan needed to provide "substantial" assistance to Afghanistan, underscoring that a symbolic contribution would not be adequate or welcome. He specifically requested that Japan dispatch two squadrons of CH-47 heavy lift helicopters or take leadership of a PRT. Citing his weak domestic political base, however, the Prime Minister told the President it would be impossible to send a major Self-Defense Force (SDF) ground component to Afghanistan and that his government would fall if he pushed the Afghan aid issue too hard.

17. (S) On July 15-16, DASD for Central Asia Bobby Wilkes delivered a second option for Japanese support that included C-130 airlift support, USD 200 million for 2009/10 Afghan elections, a regional hospital network, and USD 20 billion over five years to fund the expansion of the Afghan Security Forces. DASD Wilkes emphasized that, taken together, these measures would be considered a "substantial" package as outlined by the President. The Japanese government now is in the final stages of compiling its own package of Afghan support programs, which we expect to be provided formally to us in the coming weeks. While Japanese officials say the package contains significant financial and civilian personnel

components, it is unlikely to include a military component or substantial participation in a PRT. It will be important for you to re-enforce the President's and DASD Wilkes message on the pressing need for a substantial contribution to Afghanistan. Japanese will seize on any ambiguity on our part to avoid making hard decisions on Afghan aid.

18. (S) Your counterparts will most likely seek to remind you that Japan is already the second largest donor to Afghanistan, but this fails to take into consideration the operating costs of countries which are deploying military forces there, not to mention the casualties they are suffering. When these costs are calculated, Japan slips way down the list. One other disappointment has been the very slow progress on the Japanese portion of the ring road. We've offered to take over construction of their segment while giving them the credit for its eventual completion, but they are hesitant to accept this offer. You should mention that we look forward to the prompt completion of the project, which we believe will enhance security, enable critically needed economic growth, and bolster the authority of the central government.

INDIA

19. (C) Japan has long-standing and friendly ties with India. Former Prime Minister Abe launched a major push to strengthen the relationship, which was elevated to the level of a "joint strategic and global partnership" in 2006, and was keen to include India in a "quad" relationship with us and Australia. However, under Prime Minister Fukuda, Japan-India relations, while still viewed as extremely important, have not been pushed quite so hard. Bilateral trade is expanding, but the speed and scope of this expansion is limited and remains very small in comparison to India's commercial relationship with China, always a factor that the Japanese look to. Prime Minister Fukuda held a brief bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Singh last month on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit, and Singh is said to be set to visit Tokyo later this year. Foreign Minister Koumura is currently visiting New Delhi, where he plans meetings with Finance Minister Chidambaram, Minister of Commerce and Industry Nath, Minister of Defense Antony, and Minister of External Affairs Mukherjee.

110. (C) On the subject of the U.S.-India civil nuclear agreement, Japan has been cautious and has tried to maintain a low profile. While not wishing to antagonize or oppose its most important partner -- us -- or a highly regarded friend -- India -- Japan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation makes it extremely wary of approving an agreement that many view as weakening the NPT regime. Again, this is another issue that, if seized upon by the opposition or public, could create problems for the LDP, particularly with its pacifist-oriented partner, the New Komeito. It is unlikely Japan will take any action on its own that would impede progress on this agreement, but you should take steps to assure Japan concerning the agreement and attempt to strengthen, if not their support, then at least their "non-opposition."

PAKISTAN

111. (C) Foreign Minister Koumura most recently visited Pakistan on May 2-4, where he announced an increase in Japanese yen loan aid to approximately USD 480 million, more than double the amount of the previous year. Japan believes the stability and development of Pakistan is directly linked to the peace and stability of the Asian region and of the international community as a whole, and that fighting terrorism, consolidating democracy and achieving sustainable economic growth are more important than ever in Pakistan. Japan has also been working with the United States to provide assistance in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, but

progress on Japanese progress has been very slow due to security concerns. Your Japanese counterparts will be very interested in where you see Pakistan heading.

CENTRAL ASIA

¶12. (C) Japan's main interests in Central Asia revolve around gaining access to energy resources -- uranium as well as oil -- and to competing with China and Russia. Although DAS Feigenbaum has explained to the Japanese that we do not view the region through the lens of the "great game," it seems that the Japanese still do. Accordingly, Japan's policies in the region are designed to a large extent to avoid forfeiting all influence to Russia and China. Japan's main regional mechanism is the "Central Asia plus Japan" grouping, which has developed an action plan to promote intraregional cooperation among the countries of Central Asia. The third senior officials meeting was held last December, and Japan was represented at the Deputy Director General level. Like India, Japan's approach to the region has seemingly receded from the public view since Prime Minister Fukuda took office.

Former Foreign Minister Aso's "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity" focused heavily on providing assistance to the developing democracies of the Central Asia. We have been trying, with limited success, to involve Japan in energy transmission projects in which hydropower from Central Asian countries is moved south to help power the growing economies in India and Pakistan, as well as in Afghanistan. Your visit will present an excellent opportunity to discuss with counterparts our shared interests in the region and to explore ways in which we may work more closely together to realize them.

SCHIEFFER